

Stewardship – A Way of Life

A Communication Vehicle of the Parish Stewardship Office,
Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY

Volume 3, Issue 10
June, 2000



As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.
1 Peter 4:10

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" Out of the Box "

- R.C.

Just when her obsession with "Barney" and "Blue's Clues" had finally subsided, my daughter found a new can't-live-without television show for kids. It's called "Out of the Box." The premise is this: a teenager (Vivian) has gathered a bunch of old boxes; she invites another teenager (Tony) and several younger kids over to help take all the old boxes, configure and paint them into a wonderful playhouse where imagination is free to flourish. It's an educational show that teaches good values.

I can't help thinking of this show practically every day, as my daughter must raise the volume on the television to levels never-before-experienced during the opening song while she sings along to the theme. Then of course, there's the wonderful gift of six-hour-long videos to help me relive this experience for what seems to be every minute of my day while I'm at home.

When I was working in my prior career in banking during the 80's and 90's, the expression "out of the box" was fairly common. It was often used by management to help us (as well as our staffs) to think differently and more creatively than all were accustomed to in the past. Thinking "out of the box" involved risk-taking and suggested that everyone take on new challenges to find ways to accomplish corporate goals. It acknowledged that there should be more than one way to make things happen.

In my experience, it was not uncommon for many people to resist thinking "out of the box." Many believed things were fine the way they were. Some felt there was no need to rock the boat. However, new kinds of competition and the strong desire to ever-increase profitability required new and creative ways of doing business. To some extent, this wasn't just profit-driven; it was a matter of survival.

The Church is not driven by the same motives as business is (thank God). But I believe that the dynamic of thinking "out of the box" pertains to how we live and "be" church as we begin the new millennium. This is particularly true as we come to understand and embrace what for many are new terms, and maybe even new concepts: evangelization, discipleship, and stewardship.

(Continued on page 2)

A Gift Discovery Advertisement

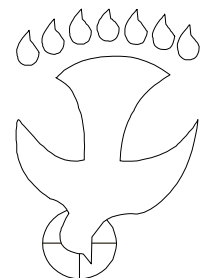
Do you know your proper place in the Body of Christ? Has stewardship become a "way of life" for you? Has identifying your spiritual gifts helped you to discern your personal vocation call?

These are some of the questions Catholic Christians are starting to ask themselves, not only in terms of their Church ministries and service, but regarding their careers and suited work.

The times are truly ripe for promoting and discerning the Second Vatican Council's concept of personal vocation as linked with one's spiritual gifts or charisms. By identifying the spiritual gifts, the call becomes clearer because the gifts serve the vocation -- both the state-in-life vocation as well as the "...personal and unrepeatable life project which the Father entrusts..." to each of us (I Will Give You Shepherds, 38).

"Uniquely His," a 33-page booklet authored by Sheila Mellick, is an excellent resource to assist Catholic individuals, study groups and parishes through this process. The booklet includes a spiritual gifts inventory, **S c r i p t u r e** references, suited ministries for each of the 20 spiritual gifts included, while also highlighting the Church teaching on charisms and personal vocation.

Sheila is also available for "You



(Continued on page 3)

From the Internet...

Submitted by Deacon Fred Molina
St. Frances Cabrinin, Coram

God Won't Ask

God won't ask what kind of fancy car you drove...

God will ask how many people you took to church who didn't have transportation.

God won't ask the square footage of your house...

God will ask how many people you helped who didn't have a house.

God won't ask how many fancy clothes you had in your closet...

God will ask how many of those clothes you gave away.

God won't ask how many material possessions you had...

God will ask whether those material possessions dictated your life.

God won't ask what your highest salary was...

God will ask if you trampled over any people to obtain that salary.

God won't ask what your job title was...

God will ask did you perform your job to the best of your ability.

God won't ask how many degrees you had...

God will ask how many people you thanked for helping you get those degrees.

God won't ask what your parents did to help you...

God will ask what you did to help your parents.

God won't ask what you did to help yourself...

God will ask what you did to help others.

God won't ask how many friends you had...

God will ask how many people you were a friend to.

God won't ask what you did to protect your rights...

God will ask what you did to protect the right of others.

God won't ask what neighborhood you lived in...

God will ask what other neighborhoods you visited.

God won't ask how many times you told the truth...

God will ask how many times you told a lie.

God won't ask about the color of your skin...

God will ask if you ever judged others by the color of theirs.

God won't ask how many times your deeds matched your words...

God will ask how many times they didn't.

**Thanks Deacon Fred..., and everyone...
keep 'em coming!**

(Continued from page 1) "OUT OF THE BOX"

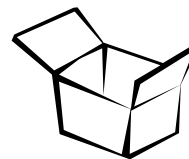
Our unchanging doctrines are not at issue here. The ways in which we *present* and *proclaim* the Good News is the matter at hand. To borrow a term from the business world – the “delivery systems” the Church uses to herald the Good News have to be current, exciting, and dynamic, so as to penetrate the consciousness of people. This will involve doing things “out of the box.”

“If you build it, they will come.” That’s not really true anymore (was it ever?). The 21st century is a time when we as a Church guided by the Holy Spirit must, more than before (certainly in recent history), reach out to others with the Good News. This “new evangelization” challenges us to be creative and to think “out of the box.” Making disciples is not an option; it is a clear instruction from Jesus to the Church:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...” Mt. 28:19.

A few questions that come to mind may help start conversations about some ways we can begin to think “out of the box” as a Church and parish:

- ⇒ Do we often operate in a “school year” mentality or can the months of June, July, and August be more opportunities to evangelize, train new ministers, and provide ministries?
- ⇒ Do we offer limited opportunities for people to connect with the Church (e.g. a parent meeting or ministry orientation session offered only once or twice) or do we plan meetings according to the realities of family life today?
- ⇒ Do we sometimes limit the ways people are “allowed” to use and share their God-given gifts in parish ministries and activities (“We have enough people”) or are all invited to share their gifts?
- ⇒ Do we just communicate like we used to (bulletin, letters, etc.) or do we use frequent and/or new means of communication (the Web, a newsletter, the local newspaper, e-mail, etc.)?
- ⇒ Do we plan most of our activities for active Catholics or do we explore ways to reach out to inactive Catholics?
- ⇒ Is there still a lot of anonymity in our parish or is our community a community of hospitality?
- ⇒ Do our programs and ministries revolve around the majority culture in our parish or do we acknowledge and address the multicultural realities in our community?
- ⇒ Are our liturgies somewhat rote or are they true celebrations?



There are no clear-cut answers to questions like these. But, with prayer, some brainstorming and lots of creative planning, we can begin to address them. We will need to think “out of the box.” Some people will be uncomfortable. Like in my old job, some may say things like, “We can’t do that,” “We’ve never done that before,” “That’s too much work.” Others will cheerfully embrace the challenges that the Church of the new millennium will face. We have to believe that our most generous God has gifted us with all we need to help work towards bringing about God’s reign. Inviting people to discover, develop, and use their God-given gifts in gratitude as good stewards is critical (in the home, workplace, community, and parish).

I have to stop writing this. The theme to “Out of the Box” is now on our living room television. My daughter is singing quite loudly. Perhaps she’ll grow up thinking “out of the box.” Imagine the possibilities. Won’t that be exciting!

God Only Knows What They'll Say!

- L.W.



As you know, every year The National Catholic Stewardship Council holds a spirit filled and practical conference on Stewardship. This year the conference is quite special for many reasons. First



off, the Council has officially gone INTERNATIONAL, now it's the I.C.S.C. Stewardship is taking root all over the world! Second, it is the great year of Jubilee and third...we have been asked to speak! Yes, you read it right. Robert and I will be presenting a session on using technology in support of Stewardship. We are honored and excited (and a little nervous) to have been asked to speak to pastors, diocesan directors of development and stewardship, parish leaders, professional firms, Catholic associations and religious congregations from around the world – Wow!

The conference is being held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, Virginia from November 12-15, 2000. If you are interested in attending and your parish is not an I.C.S.C. member, please call us by June 20th to register through our diocesan membership to receive a discount.

This year's conference promises to be "highly practical with a plethora of 'hands on' and 'how to' sessions to increase your knowledge, build new skills and learn new techniques to help you fulfill your goals."

Please call George in our Office if you would like further information or to register. 516-763-6795

(Continued from page 1) "A GIFT DISCOVERY ADVERTISEMENT"

Are Called & Gifted" workshops which cover the "call beyond the gifts," including tips for this vocational call discernment. With Catholic youth she uses a Motivational Gift Inventory (seven of the spiritual gifts) which is linked to 180 job occupations.

Be assured that living this Church teaching is not "another program." It's responding to the Holy Spirit's request over thirty years ago! As *Christifideles Laici* states: "The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one's mission" (To Discover and Live One's Vocation and Mission, 58). Also, "...the church fulfills her mission when she guides every member of the faithful to discover and live his or her own vocation in freedom and to bring it to fulfillment in charity" (I Will Give You Shepherds, 40).

For further information or to purchase Sheila's booklet (\$8.00), please write her at:
P. O. Box 4208, Utica, NY 13504-4208,
samellick@aol.com, or call 315-793-9525.



Listen to the Whisper

From the internet – submitted by Sr. Catherine Kelly, Diocesan Director, Mission Office

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and spun the Jag back to the spot from where the brick had been thrown. He jumped out of the car, grabbed some kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing?" Building up a head of steam he went on. "That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?"

"Please, mister, please. I'm sorry, I didn't know what else to do" pleaded the youngster. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop." Tears were dripping down the boy's chin as he pointed around the parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't

lift him up." Sobbing, the boy asked the executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He lifted the young man back into the wheelchair and took out his handkerchief and wiped the scrapes and cuts, checking to see that everything was going to be okay.

"Thank you and God bless you," the grateful child said to him.

The man then watched the little boy push his brother down the sidewalk toward their home. It was a long walk back to his Jaguar, a long, slow walk. He never did repair the side door. He kept the dent to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention.

God whispers in your soul and speaks to your heart. Sometimes when you don't have time to listen, He has to throw a "brick" at you.

It's your choice: Listen to the whisper – or wait for the brick.





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What's this? Wrong Information?!

This month's tip comes to us from Sr. Jackie, Stewardship Coordinator at Sacred Heart in N. Merrick.

Has this happened to you? After you typed a document you realized a date or some text was incorrect and you had to search the entire document to find it to correct it. This tip will help you speed up the process.

Find and Replace Text

- Click **Edit**
- Click **Replace**
- In the **Find what** box, enter the text you want to search for.
- In the **Replace with** box, enter the new text.
- Click either
 - **Find Next** – Searches and stops at each occurrence of the text entered in the find what box. Click **Replace** to replace it with the new text or click **Find Next** again to find the next occurrence.
 - **Replace All** - Replaces **All** text matching your criteria with out asking for confirmation.

Thanks Sr. Jackie!! Have fun in the sun with your new Stewardship gift. Keep 'em coming! Anyone who sends me a tip for next month's "Two Cents" column will receive a fun summer Stewardship gift!

Just give me a call! 516-763-6795 or e-mail: stewardship@prodigy.net

—Anthony

Time & Talent



Many parishes have concluded the annual renewal of Time and Talent. Follow-up to this process is extremely critical !!

Call our Office if you need ideas.



Also... call us if you would like to record your T&T Statistics. We have a "template" form you can use.

Alive in the

A Jubilee Year Celebration of Pentecost!!



This **JUBILEE GATHERING** begins at **2:00 p.m.** Between 2 and 3 pm there will be a Celebration in Word and Song featuring the 250 voice Diocesan Choir, the Diocesan Gospel Choir, a combined Children's Choir of 500 children and an inter-parish Spanish Choir. The **Mass of Pentecost** will begin at **3:00 p.m.**

Those adults who were Newly Baptized at Easter Vigil or Received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church will be acknowledged at this celebration.

Tickets are free and are available by contacting your local Catholic parish or the Office of Worship (516-678-5800 x504). (Even the parking is free this day! --

but we do urge people to car-pool or hire a bus for the parish.)

This will be a **celebration to remember** forever! Bring your family and friends. In fact, **reach out to inactive Catholics** who will be touched by this powerful gathering of the Church on Long Island, blessed by the Holy Spirit.

Contact your parish or the Office of Worship for more information, or visit this page of the RENEW 2000 web site:

<http://www.renewli.org/spirit.html>

Speaking of People Coming Together...



Hot, Hot, Hot Summertime Gatherings in June! *

If you have never attended a gathering, what are you waiting for?!

Join in an honest discussion of Stewardship.

What works – what doesn't and what we can do about it.

Share your parish's experience from this Spring's

Time and Talent Renewal and pick up some great ideas!!

St. Clare's Group

Thursday, June 8

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

St. Ignatius Loyola, Hicksville

Host: Eileen Byrnes-Thomson

St. Lucy's Group

Thursday, June 15

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

St. Patrick, Bayshore

Host: Wendy Wessler

St. Basil's Group

Saturday, June 24

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

St. John the Baptist, Wading River

Host: Deacon Fred Finter

Please
R.S.V.P.
516-763-6795

Please
R.S.V.P.
516-763-6795

* Well, hopefully not
TOO hot!

You Have Been Gifted By God!

This month we celebrate Pentecost. Pentecost is when we remember the fact that the Holy Spirit comes to the Church to give all of us special gifts. These wonderful gifts help us and they make us who we are: *unique* and *special*. As good Christian stewards, we need to take care of our gifts. We need to make them the best they can be. We must return them to God by sharing them for the good of others. **Everyone** has been “gifted” by God! **YOU have been gifted by God!** What are some of your gifts? Look in the mirror and figure out what it is that you like to do - what are the things that make you YOU! Then, use and share those gifts the way Jesus taught us to. That’s what stewardship is about!

What are three things that you are good at?

*These are some of your
God given gifts!*

How can you use these gifts to help others?

*These are some ways you can
thank God by using your gifts
to help others!*

And now, just for fun...circle 10 differences in the second picture below.



Answers: period instead of exclamation point in bubble; missing string on mirror; missing girl's dress; girl is frowning in mirror; no lines on boy's pant leg; flower in girl's hair; boy has a suit pocket; boy missing an ear; no polka dots on girl's dress; girl is frowning in mirror; no lines on boy's pant leg; flower in girl's hair; boy has a suit pocket